

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 29, 2023

The Honorable Rena Bitter  
Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Bitter,

We write to you today with concerns about the significant wait times for passport processing that our constituents in Oregon have been facing.

Following the rollback of COVID-19 travel regulations, it is no surprise that we have seen an increase in demand for passports. We understand requests for new passports have increased by 30 to 40 percent from this time last year. This demand has unfortunately created an unprecedented backlog and processing delays that impact our constituents' ability to travel internationally.

Routine processing times have increased to 10 to 13 weeks, and even expedited applications, which are \$60 more expensive, are taking seven to nine weeks to process. While people travelling internationally can apply in-person at a passport agency, if their international travel is within 14 days, the absence of an Oregon-based passport agency means Oregonians must travel across state lines, with some living a nearly seven-hour drive away from the nearest passport agency.

Due to these delays and lack of in-state options, many of our constituents have been understandably frustrated. Our offices have received a dramatic increase in casework requests from constituents who need assistance receiving their passport before travel.

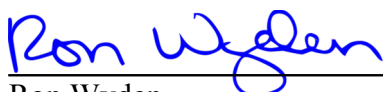
We appreciate that the U.S. Department of State (Department) has taken initial steps to remedy this issue by hiring staff to increase adjudicative capacity, opening satellite offices, and expanding access to online renewal options. However, on behalf of all Oregonians, we ask that the Department continue working to improve its efforts by exploring additional avenues to drive down the severe wait times, increase communication with applicants through the customer service phone lines to promote transparency, and promptly inform Congress of any additional resources the Department may need.

Sincerely,



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



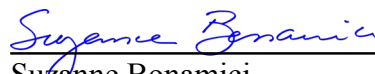
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



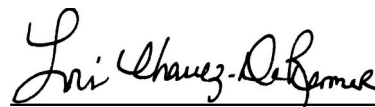
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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



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Lori Chavez-DeRemer  
Member of Congress



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Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress